

The Musical World.

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MR. WINN begs to inform his Friends and the Musical Profession generally, that his residence is 22, Hunter-street, Brunswick-square.

MR. BENEDICT begs to announce to his Friends and Pupils, that he will return to London for the season on the 27th instant. Letters to be sent to No. 2, Manchester-square; or Mr. Mitchell's, Royal Library, 83, Old Bond-street.—2, Manchester-square, 16th October, 1855.

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MR. F. B. JEWSON, begs to acquaint his friends and pupils, that he has returned to Town for the season, 21, Manchester-street, Manchester-square. 22nd October, 1855.

MISS BLANCHE CAPILL—(Voice, Contralto), Professor of Music and Singing, 47, Alfred-street, River-terrace, Islington, where letters respecting pupils or engagements may be addressed.

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NEW SONG.—"THE MOUNTAIN STREAM," composed by J. Dürner; the words by H. L. R. London: Chappel, 50, New Bond-street. Edinburgh: J. Purdie, 83, Princes-street.

MR. COSTA'S "ELL."—Addison and Co. having purchased from the composer the copyright of the above oratorio, beg to announce its publication early in January, 1856. Price to subscribers, £1 5s.; non-subscribers, £1 11s. 6d.—210, Regent-street.

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REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC BEFORE MOZART.

(Continued from page 671.)

THERE can be no doubt that the virtuosos generally, and those of the violin especially, the Corellis, Geminianis, Tartinis, Paganinis, and others, have contributed much to the progress of composition. But, with the exception of Corelli, they have contributed only in an indirect way, less through their works than through the fact that they perfected and enlarged the mechanism of the instruments destined at a later time to be used in the orchestra. By limiting themselves to the speciality of each instrument, removing a multitude of material obstacles, and increasing the sum of the technical possibilities of execution, they paved the way to grand instrumental music; they rendered arable the immeasurable field which was first and so successfully cultivated by Emanuel Bach, Boccherini, and Haydn.

We must give a precise explanation of what we understand by grand instrumental music. The two interests which we have found in the opera also divide instrumental music into two essentially distinct branches. There is the concert kind, in which the attention of the hearer is directed to one principal part, that, namely, of the solo-player; and there is a music in which the composer claims the chief attention for himself, that is, for the organic whole of a serious work, wrought out in all its parts. This is the grand instrumental music, considered as a kind, which we shall have occasion to define better in the sequel.

For some time, composition and execution were seen to support each other and to advance abreast. It could not always remain so; for though the roads ran parallel, the goals were placed at very unequal distances. As soon as the science of composition had reached its highest point, it forsook the line of ascent, which with the last century reached its termination, and turned back upon itself, thenceforth imperceptibly descending. Execution, having still an immeasurable career before it, went on, upon its side progressing. Hence the unavoidable sequel in our day, that musical art in a certain respect has had to re-travel the whole route which it had in another respect accomplished.

Chronology, still corresponding with the general course of progress in the eighteenth century, brings us finally to the most illustrious prince of music, the master and forerunner of the man who was to unite so many dynasties in one universal monarchy. Every one of my readers will have guessed that I mean Haydn. We speak not here of the sublime old man, the composer of the *Creation*, for this Haydn was a disciple of Mozart, who at an earlier time had been his pupil. We speak of Haydn in his younger years, to whom, young as he was, belonged the glory of being called the father of instrumental music. This title, so well deserved in many ways, demands an historical explanation, without which the justice done to Haydn by his contemporaries and by posterity must to my readers seem extravagant.

In speaking of the organ and the clavichord, we have already alluded to what Bach and Händel had done for these instruments. But there are also several overtures of Händel which are commendable as orchestral compositions. Good instrumental music, then, existed even before Haydn. Certainly; but either this music was nothing but an appendage to public worship, or, if it was secular, it kept for the most part within the limits of the fugued style. The finest overtures of Händel are almost only in so far valuable as they remain fugues; and this is saying enough, since they lack every sort of dramatic character, such as is required by the opera or oratorio, which they precede. In the clavichord pieces of Bach, one feels still more the want of graceful and expressive melodies, if he excepts the melodies of the contra-dances, *Allemandes*, *Correnti*, *Gigue*s, *Sarabanda*s and *Minuets*, which the great contrapuntist incorporated into his learning when he was just in his indulgent humour towards human foibles. For the rest, these pieces appear destined for all time to form the breviary of composers and the manual of pianists; and for this very reason they will penetrate into the sphere of musical enjoyment in which a trim world seeks its

own. Even for chamber music they would be too difficult and too serious.

Instrumental music must have had another mission than to be studied and admired only with closed doors; already had it known how to acquire for itself some popularity, and endeavoured to keep even pace with the opera. This ambition seemed, too, in the beginning, under the auspices of Corelli, to succeed; but it went utterly to wreck through the unskilfulness of the followers of this happy master. Corelli's sonatas are, in their kind, what the vocal music of Scarlatti was in its kind; they were almost classical works, and they stood far above the orchestra and chamber music which followed and prevailed until the time of Boccherini and Haydn. This epoch was a true interregnum of good instrumental music; its miserable and quite forgotten productions prove both the impotence of the composers, and the erroneousness of the principles on which they depend.

The Italians had laid it down as a principle that instrumental music, in its very nature, must be subordinate to vocal music—a view which at that time was not and could not be disputed. Where both co-operate, the first must necessarily be subject to the second; the instrumentists, skilful as they may have been, had not yet reached so independent a position that they could rival the singers. On the other hand the contrapuntal music, even in the land where it had been most successfully cultivated, had even less to show in the department of instrumental music. A fugued chorus of Händel, a motet of Bach, were far superior to the finest things which these masters had written for the organ, the clavichord, and the orchestra. In short, in the concert music, the human voice remained ever the most beautiful and most expressive of all instruments. From these facts it has been, not without some show of reason, concluded that instrumental music, without vocal accompaniment and relying on its own resources, is only a surrogate of vocal music; and that for this reason the instrumentists, like servants without masters, like the lackeys in comedy, had to assume the manners of this absent master and to model their style of composition and of execution after the arias, duets, and choruses in the opera; in a word, that they had to imitate the singers, so far as their feeble means permitted. Such were the maxims prevailing in Italy and consequently in all Europe, as one may see from all that is said upon this subject in the books of the eighteenth century, and especially in Rousseau's dictionary, the most respectable organ of the ultramontane views. The first consequence of this theory was, that every composer who felt any talent had his attention turned from this unhonoured and subordinate department, and that the instrumental music fell into the hands of people who were personally convinced of their own mediocrity. The second consequence was, that this mediocrity in a department, to which discouragement or timidity drove them, still sank below itself. In this way the theory seemed only too well justified by practice.

Even to this day imitation of the vocal style is recommended, both to those who compose and to those who execute concert solos. Why not, since here the instrumentist takes the place of the singer? Under the fingers of a virtuoso, the violin, the violoncello, the viola, the flute, the clarinet, the fagotto, and the oboe produce a cavatina with about as much soul, taste, and method as the most perfect singer. Nothing but words is wanting, but this deficiency the virtuoso will know how to offset through the means afforded him by the compass of his three or four octaves, through a lavish use of *floriture* and of *tour de force*, a richness, a variety of satisfactory and finished passages, before which all the bravura of vocalization becomes pale. Paganini, it is well known, proposed a wager to Malibran, and like a gallant knight he offered to bring only the fourth part of his power into play, namely, the C string alone, against a singer, who with an extraordinary compass of voice combined the most brilliant bravura in our epoch. But it is known, too, that the challenge was not taken up. Thus we see that even in concert music the instrumentist, though he imitates the singer, must do more than the singer. An adagio of the violoncello must be something more than a *cantabile* of the tenor, in order to equal this *cantabile*; and an allegro of the violin something more than

a bravura air of the soprano, to be as brilliant as this bravura air. If it were otherwise, if the instrumentist limited himself to playing pieces practicable for the voice, he would naturally remain always inferior to the voice; and for this reason the instrumentist of the eighteenth century, whose mechanical means hardly exceeded those of the singers of their time, were not their rivals, but their doubles. Then, at least, the vocal style which they employed in their capacity as soloists was no more out of place than it is to-day. But of what avail would it be to apply this style, these forms and phraseology of the opera, to the classical orchestra and chamber music, where the interest turns from the individuals to the whole, from the performers to the composer? I will cite here the acute remarks which Gerber makes upon this point in his *Lexicon of Musicians*, in the article on J. S. Bach, one of the best in the work, and one of the few the material of which has warmed up the compiling vein of the indefatigable lexicographer even to the reasoning point. Says he:

"The style of composition in which melody reigned unlimited had in the eighteenth century the upper hand, and finally extended to all kinds of music, including, of course, instrumental music. Since the composers at that time sought their ideal of melodic beauty, and even the materials of their labour, only in the songs of the theatre; and since, on the other hand, these songs had to conform themselves to the situations of the poem, where the feelings to be expressed frequently change with every line; it followed that the instrumental pieces of this pattern placed us in the situation of those who hear an unknown opera arranged as quartet. You perceived nothing, but these heterogeneous, fragmentary, and oddly contrasted ideas, resembling a rosary composed at hap-hazard of beads of all conceivable sizes and colours."

Yes, this motley mosaic, this succession of incoherent melodies, as the programme of an action which does not exist, and which it does not enable any one to understand, this libretto with blank pages, this *adapted* music, which is adapted to nothing, all this must have been very wretched! What persons of taste would not have preferred an opera music, which they understood, to a music without any sort of meaning?

There lay the immense advantage which, at that time, the dramatic composers had over the instrumentists. The former found the infallible level of the detailed plan for their labour marked out for them in the poem; the latter were utterly without aim or compass. Since they had shaken off the yoke of the canonical counterpoint, they were wholly at a loss what to set about with their freedom. They did not dream that they, to enter the lists with the dramatic composers, had got to do entirely differently and infinitely more than these did; that, to counterbalance the charm of speaking music, the expression of the passions in tones, the combined pleasures of the eyes and of the soul, they had got to lift themselves to heights unattainable by the opera; that to the relative value of music applied to the drama they had got to oppose an absolute or purely musical value, namely that whose character we have defined in treating of the fugue. Till then, however, the contrapuntists alone had been in a condition to afford an instrumental music intelligible without a programme, which was clear and significant through its own logic, which prudently economised its own stores, was continually shifting, and always consistent with itself. It was not possible, therefore, by following the steps of the theatrical composers, but only by adhering to the method of the fuguists, for the grand instrumental music to enter upon that astonishing career, at whose goal is found the overture to the *Zauberflöte*, and in which the science of composition seems even to have reached its end. But how was the melodic style to attain to the rationality and the strict unity of the fugue, and yet preserve its independence, its charm, and the power and variety of its positive expression? Just there lies Haydn's secret.

Nothing in art, any more than in nature, forms itself by leaps and without some transition. Great classical masterpieces are always announced by some more or less brilliant beginnings, which have served to prepare the way for them. The application of the fugue method to expressive melody, or, in other words, the approximation of the two opposite extremes in music, offered

in the nature of the case an unlimited field, and more degrees of ascent than any one musician alone could traverse. Haydn was neither the starting-point nor goal of the style of instrumental composition which he brought to so high a pitch of perfection. Emanuel Bach was his immediate predecessor and his pattern; Boccherini was his competitor, and Gluck, who was some twenty years older than he, composed the overture to *Iphigenia in Aulis* at a time when he could owe Haydn nothing.

Gluck was, so far as I know, the first who wrote classical pieces for the orchestra in a style not fugued. By the term *classical* we understand here, as everywhere, works which are not perishable, to whatever species they may belong and whatever character they may bear. Even the Piccinists, in their arrogant contempt for instrumental music, confessed, without difficulty, that Italy possessed no instrumental master who could be compared with Gluck. They put a sort of pride in this confession. Every nation has its own peculiar genius, said Laharpe. To the French, dramatic art; to the Italians, song; to the Germans, instrumental music: *Sum cuique!* Gluck's portion, though by far the humblest in the opinion of this Aristarchus, was, on the other hand, the clearest of the three, since the two others still disputed one another's claim. That of the French had already been disputed by the English and the Germans in behalf of Shakspeare; that of the Italians by Gluck himself, who maintained that his tragic song was worth considerably more than theirs.

In the overture to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, one of the true and oldest patterns of great instrumental music, we perceive but the first step in the imitation of the mode of treatment characteristic of the spirit of the fugue; it limits itself to introducing unity and a clear meaning into the melodic work. Years have but added to the beauty of this masterpiece, which still sounds new to our ears! What a mournful sublimity in the introduction! what majestic grandeur in the Allegro! how happily *motived* in a musical point of view, and how admirably adapted to the outline of the poem, is this mixture of warlike and pathetic thoughts, which uninterruptedly succeed and alternate with one another, as rapidly and closely as the waves of a rushing stream! Agamemnon's pride, Achilles' rage, Iphigenia's tears, all are expressed in it. And what makes the merit of the picture? The fact, that the emotions, to which the overture alludes, without *individualising* them, express themselves, and could express themselves under the same forms on the stage. There is not a sentence in it, which resembles the vocal song; not one, which seems to call the text to aid and make the programme necessary. Separate the overture from the opera, and let the hearer know nothing of the relations which connect them, and still the piece will preserve all the integrity of its musical signification. In intention it is applied music, in execution it is pure music. Nevertheless, what sort of critical remarks would the masterpiece of Gluck excite at this day? It would be objected to it, that it is too long, that is to say, rather monotonous. The overture to *Don Juan* is much longer, and no one ever finds it too long. The reason is, that Gluck, who dealt sparingly with his thought, reproduced it continually throughout the whole course of the work, after the manner of the fuguists, and consequently made use in it of hardly any other principle than modulation. Such a means does not suffice in a work of this extent. Whether a phrase in the tonic comes up again literally in the dominant, or *vice versa*, it still remains always the same phrase. The ear, which becomes accustomed to it in the new key, perceives no difference.

(To be continued.)

THE PERFUMED LETTER-BOX.—"As lately," says the *Leipziger Allgemeine Theater-Chronik* of 21st September, "Sir William Don was performing at Dresden, he underwent a little adventure, the sequel of which brought him to the lock-up house, where he remained until one hour before the commencement of a performance in which he had to take part. The patrol on the *Neumarkt*, it is said, caught him pouring some kind of liquid substance into one of the letter-boxes."—*Our Leipzig Correspondent*.

SUNDAY MUSIC.

(From Dickens' "Household Words.")

THIS earth we live on is decidedly a very curious place, and people do the most extraordinary things upon it. "Whatever is, is right," of course—the number of feet in that line of the "Essay of Man" is certainly correct—but still I can't help doubting whether it be quite right to hate our brothers and sisters quite as much as we do. It can't be exactly a proper thing to take that which does not belong to us, and cut the throats of legitimate proprietors because they object to our proceedings; to believe (or say we believe), that some hundred millions of our fellow creatures are bound headlong to perdition, because they believe rather more or less than we believe. It may be right, but it doesn't look like it, to send two honest labourers to hard labour in a villainous jail—to herd with Blueskin, Jack Rann, Bill Sykes, and Mat-o'-the-Mint—for the microscopic crime of leaving hay-making to see a review; it oughtn't to be right that a Christian priest, consecrated to God's service for our soul's health, should, by virtue of his commission of J. P., have the right to do a shameful and a cruel wrong. Let me only take one slender twig from one of the fascines with which we are perpetually fortifying our stronghold of assumed right or wrong—one splinter of the yule log of inconsistency—Music on Sundays.

And, mind, I am tolerant—I am moderate; I am content to blink the general Sunday question—Sunday and bitters, or Sunday and sweet-stuff. Meet me on this question:—Is secular music on Sundays right or wrong; and are we inconsistent in our opinions and acts concerning it?

I maintain that music is always good; and better on our best of days, Sunday. I shall not be long in finding antagonists who will maintain that Sunday music is wrong, dangerous, nay, damnable.

Now, why should secular Sunday music be so dreadfully wicked?—or, again, admitting momentarily, that it might not be quite correct, why can't we be a little consistent in the application of strictures, remembering that maxim so time-honoured (in the breach thereof), that what is sauce for the goose is (or should be) sauce for the gander likewise. Did you never dwell, O ye denouncers of Sunday music, in a provincial garrison town? Did you never listen without wringing of hands, or heaving of breasts, or upturning of eyes, or quivering accents—but, on the contrary, with much genial pleasure and content—to the notes of the regimental brass-band coming home with the regiment from church? Was not that music of a notoriously worldly, not to say frivolous, character, including marches, polkas, pot-pourris, schottisches, valse-à-deux-temps, many of which, by the self-same musicians, you heard performed only last night at the Shire-Hall Ball or the Dowager Lady Larkheel's Assembly? And yet I never heard of an association in a country town for putting down regimental waltzes on Sundays; and I decidedly never knew the poet's corner of a country newspaper to be ornamented by such a brimstone bard as he who empties his penny phials of penny wrath upon the wind instruments of Kensington Gardens. Tell me, are there not scores of watering-places—pious watering-places, the chosen villégiature of serious old ladies with heavy balances at their bankers—of evangelical young ladies, whose lives are passed (and admirably, too), in a circle of tracts, good looks, fleecy hosiery, beef tea, rheumatism, and bed-ridden old ladies—of awakened bankers, possessing private proprietary chapels, and never—oh! never—running away with the cash-box—watering-places where pet parsons are as plentiful as pet lap-dogs, and every quack, and every ignoramus, and every crack-brained enthusiast can thump his tub and think it is a pulpit—can blow his penny tin trumpet and think it is the last trump? Yet in these same watering-places I never heard of denunciations of the cavalry band, or, very frequently, the subscription band charming the air with sweet sounds on Sunday afternoons, on the pier or the parade, the common or the downs. To come nearer home, who has not heard of the Sunday band playing upon the terrace of regal Windsor? Was not that mundane music patronised by the most immaculate, severely-virtuous of kings—the pattern family-man, George the Third—and who can err who copies George the Third? And to come nearer, nearest home, see where yon palace stands—that unsightly but expensive lump of architecture in eruption—that palace before which stand no unholly cabs (oh, wicked Place du Carrousel, that sufferest cabs, omnibuses, citadines, Dame Blanches, and voitures bourgeoises!)—in that palace the sovereign necessarily dines every Sunday when in town. Do you think Mr. Anderson and the private band play psalm-tunes while the Royal Family are at dinner, indulge the royal ears with the Old Hundredth between the courses, and usher in the *entrées* with the

Evening Hymn? Away, ye hypocrites! Go away, black men, don't you come a-nigh us. You object to Sunday strains when the music is out-door—when it affords a rational, cheerful, innocent amusement for the tens of thousands of overworked humanity.

I do not consider myself to be altogether a heathen. I have no sympathy for Fetish rites, or for any form of mumbo-jumboism; be that interesting "ism" found at Eldad or little Bethel; or Saint Truimpington's Cathedral, or on the west coast of Africa. I am not a pagan, a worshipper of Ahriman, a follower of Zoroaster, or a disciple of Tom Paine, yet I am constrained to confess that I can discern no difference at all between sacred and secular music that should render the performance of the first permissible, and of the second obnoxious as impious, on the Sabbath day. Music may be grave or gay, lively or plaintive, but it is always sacred. It is an art. Its every phase can soften, refine, subdue, charm, refresh, console, humanize, elevate, improve. When it is coarse and vulgar, it is not music at all, but sound prostituted. So would I have no bad music allowed either on Sundays or week-days anywhere, but good music; what nice and concerted socialist is to weigh the nice distinction between the sacred and profane—to tell me which is lay and which is clerical music? The Dead March in *Saul*, played in quick measure, is a gig; "Adeste Fideles" is as triumphant, joyous, brilliant, mirthful as the "Happy, happy" duet in *Act and Galatea*. "My mother bids me bind my hair" is as plaintive as any air in any oratorio in existence—and so is "Auld Robin Gray." "Sound the loud timbrel," in its actual time, is almost a polka. Who can call that tremendous deep burst of joy and praise—that chorus of choruses, the "Hallelujah" in the *Messiah*, to which we cold-blooded, fleshy, phlegmatic Englishmen even award the tribute of standing up uncovered whenever it is performed—who can call the "Hallelujah Chorus" sacred in the Sternhold and Hopkins sense of the word? Sacred it is, as the masterpiece of a great musician, but it is no sour canticle, no nasal chant. It is a triumphant psalm of happiness and thankfulness; it is the voice of all humanity singing, not miserably, not dolefully, not with a mouth whose lips are cracked with vinegar, and whose tongue saturated with gall, and whose teeth on edge with bitter doctrine, and whose throat half-choked with a starched neck-cloth, but with full, expansive lungs, with a heart beating with pleasure, with nerves strung with strong reliance and cheerful faith, with a whole spirit loudly, jubilantly giving thanks for the sun, the seas, the fields, the seed-time, and the harvest, for the merciful present, the merciful to come. Old Rowland Hill was right in his generation when he declared that he could not see why the devil should have all the good tunes to himself, and followed his declaration by having the words in his hymn-book set to the best secular tunes. But I will go further than Rowland Hill. I cannot see why the devil should have any good tunes. Let us respect and cherish, ennoble and protect the art of music; and there shall speedily be no harm in music, secular or sacred, on Sundays.

Sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander. In the name of common sense, if the Star steam-packet is allowed to start every Sunday for Gravesend with a brass band on board, that plays gaily all the way to the suburban watering-places—if at Woolwich, towards seven o'clock, you may hear the Artillery Band tuning up for the officers' mess—why should the crowds who now wander purposeless about the streets and parks of London be deprived of a cheap, wholesome, and sensible gratification? Which is best—to listen to the overture to *Oberon* in Kensington Gardens, or to brood over a tap-room table, mattering out the latest false or true news of the Turco-Russian war, or growing out the odds on the next Derby, or spelling out over a misanthropic pipe the record of the late prize-fight? Which is best—to go to a Sunday bed in pure weariness, or to stalk about street corners and lean against posts till the public houses open, and gnash your teeth with impotent abuse of the legislature when they close, or maul over a pamphlet on raw cotton in a deserted club-room—or to saunter on the green grass beneath the green trees, surrounded by happy groups, gay colours, kind voices, silver laughter, children spangling the sward like daisies, manhood in its prime, beauty in its flower, old age in reverent complacency—all kept together, not by strong excitement, not by frenzied declamation, not by fireworks, or jugglers' feats, or quacks' orations, but by the simple, tender tie of a few musical chords, of a pretty tune or two played by a score of men in red coats? We might have the grass and the trees, the children and the daisies, you say, without the music. If we need recreation, we might walk in the fields or the lanes. Yes: and I have seen a cow in a field, and she was chewing the cud, and a donkey in a by-lane, and he was munching thistles. If I wish to ruminate, to be alone, to be misanthropic and hate mankind, I know where to walk: but if I wish to see my fellows around me pleasantly occupied (for what is happiness but delightful labour, and doing good actions the most delightful labour of all!) and by some harmless music pleased, and thereby rendering the best and sweetest

* Query, *Sundane*?—PRINTER'S DEVIL.

thanks to that Giver whom (as good Bishop Taylor phrases it) we cannot please unless we be infinitely pleased ourselves—then thither will I go; and thither, too, I went only two Sundays ago, into Kensington Gardens, where sixty thousand persons (and not one pick-pocket—apparent, at least), of every rank and grade in life, were collected to hear the band play. I forgive Sir Benjamin Hall, much red tape, past, present, and to come, for this one sensible concession of his.

The band playing in Kensington Gardens! Till within the last month this celebration, taking place during the summer months, twice a week, was, with some few exceptions, an exclusively aristocratic amusement. Some ragged waifs and strays of bad or miserable humanity—some heaps of tatters that had souls inside, but very little corporeal life—were wont to come here and crouch upon the grass till routed by the park-keeper's cane, dully listening to the music, and wistfully gazing round from time to time in search of eleemosynary pence. But they seldom managed to elude the vigilance of the guardians even sufficiently to pass the gate. By times threadbare men, who did not eat often, pacing the noble avenues in abstract thought, or entranced perusal of learned books, would come, accidentally, upon the aristocratic throng; but they would glance at their shabby clothes and sigh, and hie away quickly on the other side, frightened like unto a fawn leaping out from a covert into some glade of Bushy Park, where a merry picnic party is assembled, and betaking itself, startled, into the umbrage of the oaks again. People dressed to attend the band playing at Kensington. Lines of empty carriages waited outside the gates, while their possessors promenaded the gardens. Round the braying bandmen were gathered the great London dandies, the great London belles, the pearls of aristocratic purity, and, I am afraid, some other pearls of beauty and of price, but of more Cleopatra configuration, and whose Antonies found here a neutral ground whereon to vaunt their charms and possessions. Could the wily little tierrier in the sulky brougham by Victoria Gate have spoken, he would have told you when the lady in the long black ringlets, with so many diamonds, and with gold flowers on her veil, was gone—the coachman could speak, but would not—he was discreet. The whole scene was a charmed circle of moustaches and tufts (the beard movement was not then), watch-chains, fillagree card-cases, Brussels lace, moire-antique dresses, primrose kid gloves, visagrettes, auburn curls, semi-transparent bonnets, varnished boots, and bouquets de mille fleurs. As for smoking, who would have dared to think of smoking in Kensington's sacred garden, save, perhaps, wicked Captain Rolster, of the Heavies, or the abandoned Lieutenant Lillierop, of the Lancers? They smoked—those incorrigible young men—but then it was at some distance from the ladies (whose points and paces, by the way, they discussed not quite so respectfully, but with something of a sporting gusto); and there is a very difference, you will allow, between a penny Pickwick and one of Hudson's regalias, at two-and-a-half guinea per pound.

Miraculously to say, the walls (so unaffectedly may I be allowed to term the upper classes) remain. They positively, by a charming concension, and inexplicable affability, frequent the band-playing, now that it takes place on Sundays; and, considering the lateness of the season, in no diminished numbers. But to this inner ring of perfumed youths and jewelled dames, to these sons of proconsuls, and daughters of pretors, and wives of ediles, there is now added another belt—thicker, stronger, coarser, if you will (like a "keeper" to a ring of virgin gold)—a belt of workers, of peasants, mechanics, artisans, clerks, high middle-class, medium middle-class, and low middle-class men, who come here, Sunday after Sunday, rejoicing at, and grateful for, the boon (infinitesimally small as it is), who bring their wives and children, down to the baby at the breast, with them; who listen patiently and cheerfully to the music, and, wonder of wonders, do not endeavour to stone the musicians, root up the plants, set fire to the grass, dash out the brains of the children of the aristocracy against stones, rend the awells limb from limb, sell the daughters of the pretors into slavery, defile the graves of the ediles' wives, smoke short pipes in the vicinity of the band, fight among themselves, usurp the chairs by force and refuse to pay for them, carve their names on the trunks of trees, gather flowers from the Birchbroomiensis Bushiensis, introduced seventeen hundred and seventy-three (as the label says), pelt the attendants of the refreshment rooms with ginger-beer bottles, or purloin Mr. Gunter's cheese-cakes and raspberry tarts! Who do none of these things, though certain sections of thinkers and speakers, even of a moderate description, appear to think that every Sunday crowd must necessarily commit acts of this nature.

My first Sunday afternoon in Kensington Gardens was not, perhaps, begun under the most advantageous circumstances. Though the day was hot, it was lowering, and the sky seemed to say, "Put on your white ducks and book-muslins, and leave your umbrellas at home, but

in half-an-hour I rain." Again I entered the Gardens by a wrong gate (there are so many gates), and wandered about for some time disconsolately, finding myself at Bayswater when I wished myself at Knightsbridge, and catching a glimpse at the hideous Wellington statue at Hyde Park Corner through the trees, when the next vista I expected was of the red bricks of William the Third's hideous but comfortable palace. Then I came across two children I didn't love, as I do most children, but looked upon, on the contrary, with an evil eye and malevolent aspirations, for they were horrible children; they squabbled one with the other, and threatened to tell of one another. One of them ran between my legs, and another cut me across the ankles with a whip—playfully, as he meant it, no doubt; fiendishly, as I thought. They were aided and abetted in all this by a morose nurse, who looked darkly at me, and wondered, mutteringly, "What people thought of themselves." I confess, as far as I was concerned, that I thought it unjust that people should be tripped up and cut across the ankles. Then I was sorely annoyed by a stern and forbidding man, who persisted in walking before me, who had no right to wear the boots he did—they being aggressive, iron-heeled, and crumpling the gravel as he walked. He carried an umbrella as though it was a cartwhip; and I could not help fancying that his name must have been something like Captain Prosser, formerly R.N., that he had been governor of some jail, and that he was a hard man—fond of the crank. Altogether, I became uneasy and dissatisfied; was almost concluding that my dinner had disagreed with me.

But I came upon the music platform at last, the Guards' band standing in a circle and blowing manfully, the adjacent refreshment-room, the chairs—the price of which had been judiciously reduced from sixpence to one penny; and, surrounding all, a compact, earnest, eager crowd,* listening with pleased ears to the music. The fine gentlemen, the beautiful ladies, the titled and happy of the land, were there in great force—their empty carriages waited for them at the gate as in the old time, but the immense mass of those present were toilers—working people of every rank; nor is it necessary to draw any minute distinction between them, for the bank-clerk, the curate, the tradesman, have to work quite as hard, and find it quite as difficult to make both ends meet, as the carpenter, the bricklayer, and the journeyman tailor. I do not think I am called upon to descant at length upon the good behaviour, the quiet inoffensiveness of the vast assemblage here collected; upon the absence of broils, or violence, or ribald talk. I am one of those that think that an English crowd is the best-behaved, quietest, best-humored crowd in Europe. I think so still, though among those thousands in Kensington Gardens, at least a tithe formed part of that ominous well-dressed throng, whom, not many Sundays back, I had heard yelling at the same noble and happy personage; they associated so comfortably with to-day; whom I had seen lashed to frenzy by the pig-headed exhibition of a mis-directed police force, and which frenzy, but for the oil thrown a few days afterwards upon the wares, would have grown into a tempest, such as not all the trails of all the six-pounders in Woolwich arsenal, served by all the young gentlemen who have not the least business to be in the House of Commons, would have been able to quell.

The same crowd; the same Toms, and Dicks, and Harries; and see what a little is required to keep them in good humour. A circular refreshment room, with ices, ginger-beer, and Banbury cakes; some scores of garden chairs at a cheaper rate than usual, and a platform where my friends the red-jackets are operating upon ophicleide, trombone, and kettle-drum—and this was all. I even remarked that the tunes the musicians played were of the dreariest, most lachrymose, most penitential tunes that could be well heard,—still secular music, no doubt,—selections from popular operas, of course, but so long-winded and melancholy, that I could not help fancying that the band-master himself was one of the principal objectors to Sunday music, and had made a compromise with his conscience by providing the most mournful pieces in the regimental repertoire. A patient public—a placable monster—a good-natured rabble, this same English nation. Here they seemed quite satisfied, pleased, nay, grateful, for the Lifeguards' band with their "Tunes that the Cow died of." They asked not (at least audibly) for more than this, with the permission of walking about under the trees, and of seeing their children sporting on the grass. Yet, but two Sundays before I had seen another public, far away beyond the Straits of Dover—a patient public, too; good-natured, long-suffering, but not always quite contented. For that public were provided, as special Sunday treats,

* The total number of persons who entered Kensington Gardens on Sunday, August 19th, was sixty-one thousand four hundred and fifty-eight.

military bands, not one or two, but half-a-dozen; a whole concert of drums; miles of picture galleries and museums and antiquities, and palatial saloons to walk about in, free; and a Great Palace full of marvels of art and industry, for which the whole world had been ransacked, to be explored for four sous—twopence!

On the whole, I should like our Sundays to be quiet, cheerful, English, with a little more out-of-doorishness—a little more harmony—there, I have said it!—a little more sitting down at tables, or strolling about grassy swards to hear good music. Don't stop short at Kensington Gardens, good Mr. Chief Commissioner. Don't stop short at the band of the Life Guards. Remember there are such places as Hyde Park, St. James's, the Green, Victoria, and Battersea Parks. One volunteer is worth a dozen pressed men. Let the soldiers have their afternoon holiday, if they choose one; or let them have extra pay, if that is what they desire. We won't object to the rate. But let us have bands of our own in our public gardens, to disperse sweet music to us on Sunday afternoons and Sunday evenings. There will be far more brotherly love, and far less liquor, and far fewer night charges on Monday.

A little before six o'clock the musicians played "Partant pour la Syrie," and "God save the Queen;" then the crowd dispersed quietly. I saw not one policeman, and not one policeman was needed. The wheezy, red-waistcoated park-keepers were quite sufficient to quell the somewhat too exuberant animal spirits of the London boys, who are to be found in every London crowd, making noises when they ought to be silent, and clambering over railings where they have no business to be. Walking home, much elevated in spirits from the cheerful scene I had witnessed, and quite forgetting Captain Prosser and his boots, and the disagreeable children, I thought to myself—This is not much, but it is some relief for the toiling many.

SPONTINI.

(FROM THE FRENCH OF HECTOR BERLIOZ).

(Continued from page 674.)

THE *Vestale* could never have been performed, said they, without the numerous corrections which learned men condescended to make to this hideous score, in order to render it executable, etc., etc. Hence the laughable pretensions of many persons to the merit of having retouched, corrected, and purified this work of Spontini. I myself know of four composers who pass for having had a hand in it. When the success of *La Vestale* was well assured, irresistible and incontestable, they went farther: it was no longer a question of simple corrections, but of whole parts of which each of the composers claimed to have composed for it; one pretended to have made the duo of the second act; another the funeral march in the third, etc. It is singular that in all the duos and marches of these illustrious masters none are to be found possessing the style and lofty inspirations of those of *La Vestale*. Can these gentlemen have pushed their devotion so far as to present Spontini with their finest ideas? Such an abnegation passes the limits of the sublime!—At last, according to the version long admitted into the musical limbo of France and Italy, Spontini had no hand whatever in the composition of *La Vestale*. Spontini was not even capable of producing this work, written in defiance of all good sense, corrected by every one, so crude and confused, and upon which scholastic and academic anathemas had so long been turned loose; he had bought it, already written, from a grocer, together with a mass of waste paper; it was from the pen of a German composer, who had died of misery in Paris, and Spontini had only to set the melodies of the unfortunate musician to the words of M. de Jouy, and to add a few measures in order to link the scenes well together. Such being the case, it must be confessed that he arranged them most skillfully—one would swear that every note was written for the word to which it was united. M. Castil-Blaze himself never surpassed this. It was frequently asked in vain, from what grocer Spontini had, sometime afterwards, purchased his score of *Fernand Cortez*, which we know not to be totally devoid of merit; no one could ever find out. How many persons there are to whom the address of this precious merchant would have been invaluable, and who would have hastened to provide themselves at his emporium. It must have been the same who sold to Gluck his score of *Orphée*, and to J. J. Rousseau his *Devin du village*. (The authorship of both these works, of merit so disproportionate, has also been contested.)

But a truce to these incredible follies! No one doubts but that envy is able to produce in the wretch whom it devours, a state bordering upon imbecility.

Master of a position disputed with so much obstinacy, and now confident in his own strength, Spontini prepared to undertake another composition in the antique style. He was about to take *Electre*, when the emperor gave him to understand that he should be pleased to have him take as a subject for his new work, the conquest of Mexico by Fernand Cortez. This order the composer hastened to obey. Nevertheless the tragedy of *Electre* had deeply moved him: to set it to music was one of his most cherished projects, and I have often heard him regret that he had abandoned it.

I believe, however, that the choice of the emperor was a great piece of luck for the author of *La Vestale*, because it obliged him a second time to abandon the antique, and seek scenes quite as moving, though more varied and less solemn; to seek that strange and charming colouring, that proud and tender expression, and that happy hardness, which render the score of *Cortez* the worthy companion of its elder sister. The success of the new opera was triumphal. From that day Spontini ruled, lord over our first lyric stage, and could have exclaimed in the words of his hero:

"Cette terre est à moi; je ne la quitte plus."

I have often been asked which of the two operas of Spontini I preferred; and always found it impossible to reply to that question. *Cortez* only resembles the *Vestale* in the fidelity and constant beauty of its expression. As to the other qualities of its style, they are entirely different from that of its sister. But the scene of the revolt of soldiers in *Cortez* is one of those miracles almost impossible to find in the one thousand and one operas written up to this time; a miracle which I fear can only be matched by the final of the second act of *La Vestale*. In the score of *Cortez* all is energetic and proud, passionate, brilliant and graceful; inspiration blazes and overflows, yet it yields to the direction of reason. All the characters are of an incontestable truth. Amazily is tender and devoted; Cortez, passionate and impetuous, yet sometimes tender; Velasco, sombre, but noble in his savage patriotism. We find, therefore, in great eagle swoops, and lightning flashes, sufficient to illumine a world.

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One year after the appearance of *Fernand Cortez*, Spontini was chosen director of the Théâtre Italien. He collected an excellent troupe, and to him the Parisians are indebted for the pleasure of having witnessed, for the first time, the *Don Giovanni* of Mozart. The parts were distributed as follows: Don Giovanni, Tacchinardi; Leporello, Barilli; Masetto, Porto; Ottavio, Crivelli; Donna Anna, Mad. Festa; Zerlina, Mad. Barilli.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the eminent services which Spontini rendered to art during his direction of the Italian opera, an intrigue, of which money was the nerve, soon obliged him to abandon it. Paër, moreover, director at the same time of the Court Opera, and little delighted at his rival's success upon the last stage of the Grand Opera, endeavoured to disparage him, called him renegade, by gallicizing his name *Mr. Spontin*, and frequently caused him to fall into those snares which the Signor Astucio was so skilful in spreading.

Now at liberty, Spontini wrote an opera di circonstance, entitled *Pélage, ou le Roi de la Paix*, long since forgotten; then, an *opéra ballet*, *les Dieux Rivaux*, in collaboration with Persuis, Berton, and Kreutzer. At the revival of *Les Danaïdes*, Salieri, too old to quit Vienna, entrusted Spontini with directing the study of his work, authorising him to make all changes and alterations which he might deem necessary. Spontini merely retouched in his compatriot's score the finale of the air of Hypermnestre: "*Par les larmes dont votre fille*," by adding a coda full of dramatic enthusiasm. But he composed several delicious dancing airs, and a *bacchanale* which will ever remain a model of burning animation, and the type of the expression of sombre and disordered joy.

To these various works succeed *Olympie*, a grand opera in three acts. Neither at its first appearance, nor at its revival in

1827, did it obtain the success which I think due to it. Different causes concurred fortuitously to arrest its flight. Politics declared open war against it. The Abbé Grégoire was then in every mouth. There was thought to be discovered a premeditated intention of making allusion to this celebrated regicide in the scene of *Olympie*, where Statira exclaims:

"Je dénonce à la terre,
Et vous à la colère,
L'assassin de son roi."

From that time the liberal party evinced a great degree of hostility towards the new work. The assassination of the Duc de Berry, having caused a little while after the theatre of the Rue de Richelieu to be closed, interrupted the course of the representations, by violently turning the public attention from questions of art, and gave a last blow to the success which was struggling so hard to establish itself. When, eight years later, *Olympie* was again brought forward, Spontini, chosen in the interval director of music to the King of Prussia, found, on his return from Berlin, a great change in the tastes and ideas of the Parisians. Rossini, powerfully sustained by M. de la Rochefoucauld and by the entire direction of the Beaux Arts, had just arrived from Italy. The sect of pure *dilettanti* went delirious at the mere name of the author of the *Barbieri*, and most unmercifully tore to pieces every other composer. The music of *Olympie* was considered sing-song, and M. de la Rochefoucauld refused to prolong for several weeks the engagement of Mad. Branchu, who alone was able to sustain the part of Statira, which she played only at the first performance, for her farewell benefit,—and there was the end of it. Spontini, his soul ulcerated by other acts of hostility too long to mention here, set out for Berlin, where his position was, in every respect, worthy both of himself and of the sovereign who was capable of appreciating him.

On his return from Prussia, he wrote for the court festivals, an opera-ballet, entitled *Nurmahal*, the subject of which is borrowed from Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. To this graceful score he added his terrible *bacchanale* of *Les Danaïdes*, having developed and enriched it with a chorus. Afterward he re-wrote the last act of *Cortez*. I saw in Berlin this new *dénouement*, which they did not deign to receive at the opera in Paris, at the revival of *Cortez*, six or seven years later. It is magnificent, and much superior to that known in France. In 1825 Spontini produced in Berlin a fairy opera, *Aleidor*, which the enemies of the author ridiculed exceedingly, on account of its instrumental noise, said they, and also of an orchestra of anvils which he had made to accompany a chorus of blacksmiths. This opera is entirely unknown to me. I have been able, however, to indemnify myself by perusing the score of *Agnès de Hohenstaufen*, which succeeded *Aleidor* twelve years later. This subject, called the *Romantic*, was of a style entirely different from those employed by Spontini up to that time. He has introduced therein for the *morceaux d'ensemble* some very curious and arduous combinations; such, among others, as that of an orchestral storm, executed while five persons sing a quintet upon the stage, and while a chorus of nuns is heard in the distance, accompanied by sounds imitating those of an organ. In this scene, the organ is imitated so as to produce the most complete illusion, by a small number of wind instruments and bass-voles, placed behind the scenes. Now-a-days, organs being found as frequently in the theatre as in the church, this imitation, interesting on account of the difficulty overcome, seems useless.

To close the list of the productions of Spontini, I must mention his *Chant du peuple Prussien*, and various compositions destined for military bands.

The new king Frederick William IV. has preserved the traditions of generosity and benevolence of his predecessors towards Spontini; notwithstanding the unfortunate *état* of a letter, doubtless imprudent, written by the artist, and which drew upon him a judgment and a condemnation. The king not only pardoned him, but allowed Spontini to settle in France, when his nomination to the Institute obliged him to remain there, and gave him an evident proof of his affection by permitting him to retain his title and salary of chapel-master to the court

of Prussia, although he had renounced the fulfilment of his functions. Spontini was induced to seek repose and academic leisure, first by the persecutions and hostilities heaped up against him at Berlin; and afterwards by a strange disease of the ear, the cruel effects of which he suffered at intervals during a long space of time. During the periods of the perturbation of an organ which he had exercised to such an extent, his sense of hearing was almost extinct; yet every isolated sound which he perceived seemed to him an accumulation of discord. Hence an absolute impossibility for him to bear any music, and the obligation to renounce it until his morbid period had passed away.

(To be continued.)

THE MARSEILLAISE AND ITS AUTHOR.

THE Philadelphia correspondent of the *Charleston Courier*, describing his walk through the picture gallery of that city, refers to a painting which is there of Rouget de Lisle singing *The Marseillaise Hymn* at the house of the Mayor of Strasbourg, 1792. It will be remembered, he adds, that De Lisle was an officer of engineers at Strasbourg, who relieved the tediousness of a garrison life by writing verses and indulging a love of music. He was a frequent visitor at the house of the Baron de Diedrich, a noble Alsacien of the constitutional party, the Mayor of Strasbourg. The family loved the young officer, and gave new inspiration to his heart in its attachment to music and poetry, and the ladies were in the habit of assisting by their performances the early conceptions of his genius. A famine prevailed at Strasbourg in the winter of 1792. The house of Diedrich was rich at the beginning of the revolution, but was now become poor under the calamities and sacrifices of the time. Its frugal table had always a hospitable place for Rouget de Lisle. He was there morning and evening, as a son, as a brother. One day, when only some slices of ham smoked upon the table, with a supply of camp bread, Diedrich said to De Lisle, in sad serenity, "Plenty is not found at our meals; but no matter—enthusiasm is not wanting at our civic festivals, and our soldiers' hearts are full of courage. We have one more bottle of Rhine wine in the cellar. Let us have it, and we will drink to liberty and the country. Strasbourg will soon have a patriotic fête, and De Lisle must draw from these last drops one of his hymns that will carry his own ardent feelings to the soul of the people." The young ladies applauded the proposal. They brought the wine, and continued to fill the glasses of Diedrich and the young officer until the bottle was empty. The night was cold. De Lisle's head and heart were warm. He then found his way to his lodgings, entered his solitary chamber, and sought for inspiration at one moment in the palpitation of his citizen heart, and at another by touching, as an artist, the keys of his instrument, and striking out alternately portions of an air, and giving utterance to poetic thoughts. He did not himself know which came first; it was impossible for him to separate the poetry from the music, or the sentiment from the words in which it was clothed. He sang altogether, and wrote nothing. In this state of lofty inspiration he went to sleep with his head upon the instrument. The chants of night came upon him in the morning, like the faint impressions of a dream. He wrote down the words, made the notes of the music, and ran to Diedrich's. He found him in the garden digging water lettuces. The wife of the patriot mayor was not yet up; Diedrich awoke her. They called together some friends who were, like themselves, passionately fond of music, and able to execute the compositions of De Lisle. One of the young ladies played, and Rouget sang. At the first stanza, the countenances of the company grew pale—at the second, tears flowed abundantly—at the last, a delirium of enthusiasm broke forth. Diedrich, his wife, and the young officer, cast themselves in each other's arms. The hymn of the nation was found. Alas! it was destined to become a hymn of terror. The unhappy Diedrich, a few months afterwards, marched to the scaffold by the sounds of the notes first uttered at his hearth, from the heart of his friend and the voice of his wife.

The new song, executed some days afterwards publicly at

Strasbourg, flew from town to town through all the orchestras. Marseilles adapted it, to be sung at the opening and adjournment of the clubs; hence it took the name of *The Marseillaise Hymn*. The old mother of De Lisle, a royalist and a religious person, alarmed at the reverberation of her son's name, wrote to him: "What is the meaning of this revolutionary hymn, sung by hordes of robbers who pass all over France, with which our name is mixed up?" De Lisle himself, proscribed as a federalist, heard its re-echo upon his ears as a threat of death, as he fled among the paths of Jura. "What is this called?" he inquired of his guide. "*The Marseillaise*," replied the peasant. It was with difficulty that he escaped.

The Marseillaise was the liquid fire of the revolution. It distilled into the senses and the soul of the people the phrensy of battle. Its notes floated like an ensign dipped in warm blood over a field of combat. Glory and crime, victory and death, seemed interwoven in its strains. It was the song of patriotism, but it was the signal of fury. It accompanied warriors to the field, and victims to the scaffold.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. DE S., Higher Broughton, Manchester.—*Our fair correspondent's request shall be attended to in due time.*

J. W., Borough Road.—*The gentleman's request ditto, ditto.*

MASE.—*Jenny Lind appeared only twice as Norma at Her Majesty's Theatre.*

SQUAB PARTY.—*Our Gloucester contributor, as he will perceive, has been anticipated. Thanks, however, for the tender of his communication.*

L.—*We cannot inform correspondent of HERR A. REICHARDT'S "address on the Continent." Herr Reichardt's address in London—where, we believe, he is at present to be found—is 36, Golden-square.*

UNIFORM.—*No—Madame Gassier was first brought out in London by Mr. Lumley, and appeared at her Majesty's Theatre in, we believe, 1847.*

THE MUSICAL WORLD.

LONDON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27TH, 1855.

A CHANGE has come over the spirit of the Philharmonic Society—the Old. A general meeting of the members was summoned on Monday last, and was held at the Hanover-square Rooms. There was a full assembly. A great deal of discussion took place, the particulars of which have not transpired—at least have not reached us. Everything was conducted with closed doors. One result of the conference, however, found its way into broad daylight—the retirement from office of three of the directors. The three directors were Messrs. Sterndale Bennett, Lucas, and Blagrove—three important and influential members. Great was the consternation of the friends of the Society. The resignation of Mr. Sterndale Bennett was hardly a matter of surprise. He allowed himself to be nominated a director, rather to please those who eagerly solicited him to take the office on his shoulders, than that he had any predilection to sustain the burthen. Mr. Sterndale Bennett, it was well known, had no great love or liking for the Society; nor, indeed, had he any reason. Their scurvy treatment of him—or, at least, abnegation of his talents and standing as a musician—when they refused to accept Miss Arabella Goddard's selection of one of his concertos at one of their concerts—could not but have galled him, and diminished his feeling of sympathy—and respect, too—for the Society. It could, therefore, hardly create astonishment in any mind, that Mr. Sterndale Bennett, who had accepted office with no good will, and under such peculiar circumstances, should have withdrawn at the

earliest opportunity. It was a very different matter with Messrs. Lucas and Blagrove—two of the oldest and staunchest members of the Old Philharmonic Society. The first-named, more especially, has long been regarded as one of the pillars of the institution—more properly, the Redan or Malakoff, not to be overthrown but by an allied attack. What kind was the attack, from what quarter directed, or under what alliance carried out, which was able to demolish this strong and apparently irresistible barrier, we are not in a condition to explain. Neither can we surmise. No light work, however, we feel assured, could have produced so unexpected a result. To assaults from weak forces, and bombardment by small arms, Mr. Lucas was directly proof. The cause of his resigning was no trifling cause, and, when the truth shall be explained, from all we know of Mr. Lucas, we are convinced, that no other course was left open to him. Of Mr. Blagrove the same—with a difference—may be averred. He has served the Society long and well, and was one of its most strenuous supporters. We may conclude, without a fear of falling into error, that Mr. Blagrove had excellent cause for giving up his directorship in the Old Philharmonic Society.

The successors to Messrs. Lucas, Blagrove, and Sterndale Bennett in the directorate are Messrs. W. H. Holmes, Clinton, and Calkin. The two last-named gentlemen have served before; the first is appointed for the first time. Mr. W. H. Holmes is an admirable pianoforte player, a thorough musician, and an excellent composer. Moreover, he is a true artist, and, if in his power, would direct all his talents and energies to advance any cause in which he embarked. Is it in Mr. W. H. Holmes's power to turn his talents and energies to account? If the Philharmonic Society required a working man—one who could devote time and consideration to its affairs—it could easily have found one better suited than that accomplished professor. Unfortunately, besides being a pianoforte-player, musician, and composer, Mr. W. H. Holmes is a teacher, and in such universal request, that we know he considers it a great treat, when he is enabled to attend one concert of the Philharmonic in the season. Is such a man, we would ask—however eminent his talents, however high his position, and who cannot even call his hours his own—fit to preside over the destinies of an institution which demands the minutest care and thought on the part of those to whom the administration of its affairs is entrusted? We cannot think it, and we therefore look upon the election of Mr. W. H. Holmes as director of the Philharmonic, considering all things, no wise step of the members, and Mr. W. H. Holmes' acceptance as a mere act of grace and courtesy.

It is unnecessary to make any allusion to the election of Messrs. Clinton and Calkin. They are very old members, have plenty of spare time on their hands, and are well "up" in the traditions of the Society—a great recommendation for a director. In this light they are invaluable, and their places could not well be supplied.

Of Mr. Anderson—the presiding genius of the institution—we hear nothing all this while. With inimitable tact and finesse, though taking part in all the changes and squabbles, at meetings general and special, he manages to withhold his name from public report. A stormy debate may take place, members may withdraw, directors be chosen, and the particulars be blazoned abroad, but the name of Mr. Anderson seldom or never is brought forward. Mr. Anderson is the Rock of the Old Philharmonic Society, around and against which all the other members, as waves, buffet one another, and lash themselves ragingly to no purpose. The

Rock is a steadfast Rock, and minds not their buffetings, nor their ragings, no more than it does the idle winds of the popular breath, which sometimes assail it from the four quarters of the heavens—north, south, east, west—all at once, and impotently. The Rock is granite, and is protected as well by its position as by its hardness from all external assaults of man, or the elements. Mr. Anderson, we re-say, is the Rock of the Old Philharmonic Society—we would not venture to say, Rock-ahead, least we should be thought "insinuating," besides, the term is not polite, even if it did convey a meaning.

We trust to be in a position next week to give fuller disclosures, and to supply further particulars on the recent changes and exchanges. The reasons for the retirement of Messrs. Sterndale Bennett, Lucas, and Blagrove, cannot long be kept secret. Until we are better satisfied as to what has really occurred, and hear more, we shall not dare give utterance to the idea which has crossed our mind—that "there is something rotten in the state of Denmark."

ST. MARTIN'S HALL.

MR. HULLAH commenced his season on Wednesday evening with Mendelssohn's oratorio, *St. Paul*, a work too much neglected by our Sacred Societies in the present day. If not an *Elijah*, as some imagine, *St. Paul* is a masterpiece, and is, moreover, full of beauties and replete with interest. Why Mr. Costa and Mr. Surman, following suit, should almost entirely shelve it, is more than we can imagine. If *St. Paul* is to be overlooked, it is a matter for regret that *Elijah*—to whose prodigious success its neglect is attributed—should have been composed. The oftener we hear *St. Paul*, the more we are impressed with its power, grandeur, and magnificence. The performance on Wednesday night, though excellent in many respects, was hardly up to the mark. The choruses of *St. Paul* have yet to be mastered by the members of Mr. Hullah's first upper singing class. A few more performances—better even than rehearsals, of which, indeed, judging from the general execution, there seemed to have been no want—will give the singers confidence, and restore to them that self-dependence, so well manifested on previous occasions, but which sometimes failed them on Wednesday evening last. The principal vocalists were Mad. Clara Novello, Miss Palmer, Messrs. Lokey, Henry Buckland, and Winn. The last-named gentleman is a *debutante*. He comes from the Northern Counties with a good reputation as a bass. His singing has not belied his fame, and we may welcome Mr. Winn as a decided acquisition to the sacred concert room. The Hall was well filled, and the audience, on the whole, were well pleased with the performance. Mr. Hullah's directing, as usual, was characterised by care and intelligence.

PANOPTICON.—The chief fault of Mr. Buckingham's lecture on the old Italian music consists in its being too brief, and the illustrations too few for so fertile a theme. The examples from Palestrina, Stradella, Scarlatti, Corelli, and Pergolesi were all very well and to the purpose; but why omit Leo—who is said, by his admirers, to have approached Handel in sublimity—and Jomelli, whose Requiem (in E flat) has been, by some, compared to Mozart's, not to speak of Clari, Leal Moreira, and many others? In the Pastoral from Corelli may be traced, according to Mr. Buckingham's theory, the germ of the well-known pastoral symphony in the *Messiah*—one among the innumerable instances in which Handel drew on the thoughts of his cotemporary. The selections from Cimarosa and Cherubini, besides being but indifferent specimens of the masters, belong properly to the next lecture—the Modern Italian Masters. With these exceptions, Mr. Buckingham was as amusing and instructive as ever.

FASHIONS A LA RACHEL.—The keeper of a dining house in New York announces a pudding *a la Rachel*, a shoemaker garters *a la Rachel*, a confectioner ices *a la Rachel*, and numerous barbers confuses after the manner of Mdlle. Rachel.

EXETER HALL.—Attention has been frequently called to the imperative want of a free and easy egress from buildings intended for public assemblies, and more particularly with regard to Exeter Hall, which, of all other buildings, should have this facility. The *Builder* says, "The large hall may be capable of seating 3,000 persons. It has but three points of exit, their united width being about eighteen feet. There are two tiers of offices under the large hall, so that at least fifty steps have to be descended before the street level is gained. It does not require much discrimination to perceive that a building used for large assemblages, at a considerable height from the ground, presents points of danger greatly in excess of one that is on the ground level. Two of the three staircases are very narrow, full of angles, and awkward turning points: in a time of excitement they would be dangerous. The third staircase, leading into the Strand, is wider, but it is nearly straight, with but one landing, and the danger resulting from a sudden rush down the fifty or sixty stairs composing it, may readily be noted by any one looking through the swinging doorway in the Strand." The matter has been repeatedly complained of by bodies holding meetings there, and by ourselves and others of the public press, but without effect; and, probably, nothing will be done to remedy the difficulty till an alarm of fire, or some other panic, seizing on a large assemblage of people endeavouring to escape to the street, shall be attended with fatal consequences.

SADLER'S WELLS.—The title of the new tragedy, *Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh*, at once connects the story with the assassination of the Earl of Murray, Regent of Scotland. History tells us that this event was unconnected with political designs, but the author has made it the pivot of the intrigue of a Romish priest to restore Mary Stuart to power, after the battle of Langside. Hamilton (Mr. Phelps), the assassin, being made prisoner in the action, and banished and separated from his wife by sentence of government, is persuaded by the priest, Cyril Baliol (Mr. Marston), that Murray is in love with her, and after goading Hamilton to a vain encounter with the Earl, tells him that Murray has used violence to gratify his passion; and finally that Margaret is, in consequence, dead. Frantic with his supposed wrongs, he is secreted in the house of Baliol, and shoots the Earl from the window; but no sooner is the deed done than Margaret, having escaped from her custodians, rushes in, to the utter confusion of Baliol and his plots; but Hamilton drops exhausted with his passions and the effects of a wound he has received in his encounter with Murray. This *tableau*, which concludes the fourth act, gave expectations of an effective *dénouement*, which, had they been realized, would have given the piece a success rarely witnessed since the triumphs of Sheridan Knowles, and Sir E. B. Lytton; but it was surely a mistake to bring the fiery Hamilton and his wife again before us, stretched on a barren moor, in their attempt to escape justice, with Baliol, their villainous and detected destroyer, standing over them as their companion and protector. The rest is made up of a few weak repentant speeches from Hamilton, and some affectionate responses from Margaret. The officers come up, Baliol is taken, and Hamilton dies of exhaustion. The interest and stirring incidents of the three middle acts would make it worth while to re-model and re-write the last. As it was, however, the piece was highly successful, and the acting, scenery, and stage appointments were of their usual excellence. Energy is Mr. Phelps's forte, and he had abundant opportunity for it. The chief responsibility, however, lay on Mr. Marston, and nothing of the kind could exceed his delineation of the close and wily priest. Miss Eburne, who has appeared in a variety of characters since her *début*, is evidently possessed of quick natural impulses and a clear judgment to guide them. She must be regarded at present rather as an intelligent and promising votary of the muse, than as a highly gifted and finished artist. Her reading is always intelligible and clear, and her expression often forcible and impassioned. With youth and an expressive countenance to add to the list of her good parts, we may, we hope, congratulate Mr. Phelps and the public on this acquisition to the London stage.

STRAND.—A burlesque on the utter failure at Drury Lane has been produced here, and, considering the very short time there has been to conceive, prepare, and get it up, it has met with con-

siderable and well-merited success. The practical humour of the piece consists in the performers reversing the characters. Miss Somers and Miss Bennet have the principal male parts, while Mr. Shalders personates the heroine with his accustomed humour. The dialogue is lively and pointed, and the piece has been repeated during the week to full houses.

MUSICAL GOSSIP.

AMONG the approaching publications of some interest is the *Eli* of M. Costa, which is announced to appear in January next.—An Italian version of *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* will be published early in the forthcoming year.—Vincent Wallace is on his way to England, if, indeed, he has not already arrived. He is understood to have two MS. operas in his portmanteau.—A general meeting of the members of the Philharmonic Society was held on Monday evening at the Hanover Square Rooms. Messrs. Sterndale Bennett, Lucas, and Blagrove tendered their resignation as directors, and Messrs. W. H. Holmes, Clinton, and Calkin were elected in their places.—M. Sainton intends giving to the world his new fantasia on *Rigoletto* which has been listened to with so much pleasure in the provinces.—The celebrated *chef-d'orchestre* Strauss has received an invitation to visit St. Petersburg on the occasion of the approaching carnival, with a promise of 2,000 roubles more for the engagement than he has hitherto received.—The Vienna papers announce the death of Francis Ignatius von Holbein, born at Zinzendorf in 1799, actor, dramatic author, and director of the Vaudeville in Germany. Many of his works were highly popular.—Private letters from the United States represent Mdlle. Rachel's expedition to be a failure. The Yankees, it seems, don't like French tragedies, don't like French acting, and don't understand French. Jules Janin is in a rage with Jonathan for not having *godâ* Rachel's talent; and he tells him, without much mincing, that he is an utter barbarian, and thinks of nought but dollars.—The Piedmontese Government has granted 3,000 lire annually for the three best Italian plays successfully represented on the boards of the Theatre-Royal at Turin. The first prize is to be 1,400, the second 1,000, and the third 600 lire.—Considerable sensation has been caused in theatrical circles in Paris by the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Villars, one of the best actors of the Gymnase. On Saturday he did not arrive at the theatre, and in consequence the performances had to be changed, and since that day he has not yet returned home, and nobody can say what has become of him.—A lady named Madame Constantini, appeared on Wednesday evening at the National Standard Theatre, as Amina in *La Sonnambula*, with complete and well-deserved success. In Madame Constantini we recognise an old—though young—favourite of the public, Miss Blundell, organist of St. Andrew's Church, Liverpool, and sometime pupil of Dr. Wesley. For the last four years, by the advice of sundry vocal professors, she has been studying singing in Italy, under the best masters, and appeared lately at some of the provincial theatres. Miss Blundell, it will be remembered, gave a performance of classical music on Willis's large organ, at the Great Exhibition, in Hyde Park, in 1851, for which she received no limited praise in the journals. Madame Constantini appeared at the Marylebone Theatre on Thursday night, and again at the National Standard on Friday.

HOW TO GET RID OF "RECALLS."—The custom of calling actors before the curtain was broadly satirised at the Circus in the Champs Elysées, Paris, a few nights ago. There every rider after his retirement is called back to the ring to receive additional applause. On this occasion the servants of the Cirque appeared in the arena with rakes to smooth over the sawdust. Some English who were present, entering into the spirit of the above practice, applauded the sawdust smoothers, and, on their retirement, insisted on their re-appearance, to receive, in common with the more illustrious performers on horseback, a renewal of homage. The French portion of the audience appeared greatly tickled at this specimen of John Bull's humour.

MALAGA.—The operatic season was brought to an unexpected conclusion on account of the alarm excited by the cholera. Of the operas performed, *Rigoletto* and *Il Trovatore* pleased the most.

PROVINCIAL.

HALIFAX.—MR. SALAMAN'S LECTURE.—On Friday evening Mr. C. Salaman, assisted by Miss Milner and Mr. H. C. Cooper, gave a lecture on the "Pianoforte and its precursors," in St. George's Hall, Bradford. Mr. Salaman is an eminent composer and pianist, and by his devotion to the art has become one of the skilled in its practice, and in a knowledge of its previous history. He had with him on the platform an ancient virginal, and a harpsichord, on which he played several pieces to show the capabilities of the instruments, and progress of keyed and stringed instruments previous to the invention of the pianoforte in 1711, by Cristofali. He then passed on to the pianoforte and its history, describing the various improvements made from time to time in its structure; combining all with anecdotes of various composers and executants, and wound up with a eulogy on the piano as a family instrument, on the cultivation of a taste for music, as tending to a better tone of moral and social happiness. His execution is masterly in the extreme, and is touch is delicate, yet firm and precise. The performance of the "Chaconne," by Sebastian Bach, drew forth rapturous applause. Miss Milner's voice has all the softness of the contralto, with the power of the soprano, and gains in power and compass. The performance of Pacini's "Sommo Cielo" was loudly eulogised. The whole entertainment was more than amusing, it was instructive and intellectual, and reflected the utmost credit on all the performers. Mr. Salaman, as a lecturer, speaks clearly and distinctly. His language is chaste and elegant, and from the thorough knowledge which he possesses of his profession, all his observations are replete with interest.—*Halifax Courier*.

BRIGHTON.—The Royal Pavilion Band gave a concert on Thursday evening in the Music-Room of the Pavilion, the services of the Misses Brougham and of Herr Bonn, vocalists, being secured for the occasion. The young ladies, with their usual good fortune, obtained encores in all their pieces, and Herr Bonn decided the anticipations of his hopeful admirers. The Royal Pavilion Band, which is composed entirely of wind instruments, and is at present "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," is certainly not calculated, when heard within four walls, to "create a sensation" in its favour. When Polonius propounds to Hamlet to "walk out of the air," the philosophic Prince keenly suggests—"into my grave."—*Guardian*.

KIDDERMINSTER MUSICAL FESTIVAL.—The gross receipts of the festival, including ball, amount to £871 11s., in addition to which the following donations have been received: Lord Ward, £50; Earl Beauchamp, £10; Right Hon. R. Lowe, M.P., £20; and Messrs. Southan and Co., £10. The expenses are, of course, considerable, but it is hoped there will be a balance enabling the promoters to carry out the objects they have in view.

LIVERPOOL.—The first of a series of cheap organ concerts was given in St. George's Hall, by Mr. T. W. Best, the organist of the hall, on Saturday afternoon. The charge of admission was sixpence. The Law Courts' Committee have not yet finally decided as to the future concerts to be given in the hall. Many of the members are of opinion that they should be free, but, from the injury inflicted on the building during the "Alma" holiday, when the public were admitted gratuitously, it has since been considered advisable that some charge should be made, however small, particularly as the receipts would be divided amongst the various local charities. A party, consisting of Mad. Anna Thillon, Mr. Augustus Braham, Mr. Henri Drayton, and Mr. George Case, gave a concert in the Concert-hall, Nelson-street, on Monday, which was repeated every evening during the week.

VITERBO.—M. Meyerbeer's opera *Roberto il Diavolo* has been played for the first time, and created a great sensation.

MADRID.—Verdi's *Il Trovatore* has been produced at the Royal Theatre by the Italian company, and has met with its accustomed success. The parts were filled by Mesdames Garibaldi, Bassi, and Borghi-Vietti, Signori Malvezzi, Vialletti and Beneventano. The next opera was *Linda di Chamouni*, in which Mad. Tili made her first appearance; the tenor was Sig. Galvani. Both operas pleased the public, but the company in general does not seem to be satisfactory.

FOREIGN.

BERLIN.—An important novelty worthy of notice, at the Royal Opera-house, is the production of *Robert le Diable* with a great portion of the scenery new, and the substitution of Herr Theodor Formes in the part of Robert, for Herr Pfister, who appeared as Bertram. The other characters were cast as usual. The concert programmes are now as plentiful as blackberries; every vacant space on the walls of the capital is covered with them. Herren Knabe and Medorn gave their first soirée of chamber music last Thursday, in Sommer's rooms, which were very full. Among other pieces performed on the occasion were Beethoven's sonata in C minor, for violin and piano, (op. 30), and trio in C minor, (op. 1). The first concert of a new society, the *Orchester-Verein*, took place on Saturday, the 6th inst., under the direction of Herr Julius Stern. We are informed in their prospectus, that: "The aim of the *Orchester-Verein* is to produce the works of acknowledged masters, executed more rarely in Berlin than those of others, to whom, however, they are quite equal, as well as the most remarkable productions of contemporary composers, who, starting from their predecessors, have struck out a new path. The future alone can decide whether they are working out an unaccomplished purpose, or, involved in error, wandering from the right road. It is, however, the duty of the Present to make the attempts of such men known to the world." The pieces selected, on the occasion, promised well for the success of the scheme. They were Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* overture, Beethoven's violin concerto, and several pieces from his *Ruins of Athens*, and the first symphony (B major) of Robert Schumann. The violin concerto was played by Herr Laub, who resided for some time both in London and Weimar. The audience was a very numerous one, and gave the most unmistakable manifestations of its approbation of the efforts of the new society. Last, though not least, on the list, stands Herr Liebig, who has just opened his series of *Soirées für klassische Orchester-Musik*, in Mader's rooms. The programme was composed of Beethoven's overture to *Coriolanus*, and Mendelssohn's to *Ruy Blas*, Mozart's symphony in D major, and Haydn's "Military Symphony." The rooms were crowded to suffocation, and not a place was to be obtained for love or money. In the course of the present month, probably on the 17th inst., a new oratorio, entitled: *Das Wort des Herrn*, by Herr Küster, will be performed, for the first time, in the Petri-kirche. The text, made up of selections from the Scriptures, is from the pen of the composer himself. During the winter, the members of the Singacademie will execute three oratorios: *Hob* (Job), by Herr C. Löwe, *Judas Maccabæus*, by Händel, and *Paulus*, by Mendelssohn.—Mozart's *Idomeneo* went off with great success at the Royal Opera-house, on the king's birthday. There was not a vacant place in the whole house, a fact due, perhaps, quite as much to the genius of the great composer as to the enthusiasm experienced for the present king of Prussia. Be that as it may, the opera was given with great spirit and the audience were profuse in their marks of approbation. Herr Pfister played *Idomeneo*, Madlle. Johanna Wagner, *Idamante*; Mad. Küster, *Electra*; and Mad. Herrenburger, *Julia*. The precision and finish of the orchestra, under the direction of Herr Taubert, were admirable, and the new scenery by Herr Gropius deserving of the highest praise. The Cologne Männer-Gesang-Verein sang before the king at Sans-Souci, on the same date.

COLOGNE.—The studies of the pupils of the *Rheinische Musik-Schule* were resumed about a week since, under the direction of Herren Hiller, Franck, and Rheinthal, who have returned from their vacation rambles. The operatic season opened on the 1st inst. with *Lucrezia Borgia*.

DANZIG.—The theatre was opened for the season on the 7th inst. with *Les Huguenots*.

AIX-LE-CHAPELLE.—Herr Ernst has given several concerts.

MAYENCE.—Great activity has been displayed by the management, since the theatre was re-opened on the 1st ult., *Les Huguenots*, *Masaniello*, *Belshazzar*, *Le Juive*, *Le Maçon*, *Tannhäuser*, *Cæsar und Zimmermann*, and *Robert le Diable*, being among the operas already produced.

HAMBURG.—The first Philharmonic concert will take place on the 10th November, for which occasion Herr Ferdinand Laub of Berlin has promised his assistance. In the course of the second concert, which is fixed for the 8th December, one of the pieces composing the programme will be "*Les Préludes*," by Dr. Franz Liszt. The theatre closed last week with *Rigoletto*, and thus ended Herr Sachse's three months' management.

LUBECK.—The Stadttheater re-opened, on the 3rd inst., with *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

PRESB.—The manager of the German Opera has announced his intention of producing *Fidelio*, *Tannhäuser*, *Les Huguenots*, and Dr. Spohr's *Faust*, during the season just commenced.

ZÜRICH.—Herr Richard Wagner is occupied in completing the second piece, *Die Walküre*, in his "*Nibelungen-Trilogie*."

MÜNICH.—The grand musical festival on the 4th and 5th inst. was a very brilliant affair. The execution, under the direction of Herr Franz Lachner, gave general satisfaction. The number of persons taking part in the performance amounted to one thousand three hundred, of which more than nine hundred were vocalists.

WEIMAR.—Dr. Franz Liszt presided on the 18th inst., at a concert given by the *Hof-Capelle* in Brunswick. The programme was composed of the overture to Benvenuto Cellini, by M. Hector Berlioz; a new and original pianoforte concerto, composed and executed by Mr. Henry Litolff; and *Orpheus* and *Prometheus*, "symphonic poems," by Dr. Franz Liszt, who conducted the entire performance.

MERSEBURG.—The inauguration of the new cathedral organ, built by Herr Frederick Ladegart, of Weissenfels, was a grand event, and one that will not soon be forgotten by the inhabitants. Hundreds streamed from every village and hamlet in the neighbourhood, to be present on the occasion. The proceedings opened with a fantasia by Herr Engel, under whose direction the concert was given. This was followed by the grand fantasia and fugue in C minor, composed by Dr. Franz Liszt, and played by Winterberger, his pupil; the fugue in G minor, by Sebastian Bach; and an original fantasia composed and executed by Herr Schellenberg, of Leipsic, on the chorale, "Ein feste Burg." There were, also, several vocal pieces, in the shape of solos from Bach's *Passions-Musik*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, in addition to which, Mdlle. Genast sang two songs, composed by J. W. Frank in the 17th century.

MÜHLHEIM.—A fourth member of Herr Formes' family has at present embraced the career so successfully followed by those of that name who are such favourites in the world of music. The *débütant* is the youngest son. He made his first appearance at the theatre here, and possesses a fine barytone.

HANOVER.—Herr Alfred Jaell, the pianist, lately gave a performance in the theatre and was most favourably received. The four pieces selected by him were of his own composition: a paraphrase on *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, *Sérénade Italienne*, a transcription of an English song, and a *Polka de bravoure*.

GERA.—His Royal Highness the Duke of Saxe-Gotha has presented the gold medal of the *Ernestinischer Hausorden* to Herr Tichirch, *Capellmeister*, as an acknowledgment of his efforts in the cause of Art.

MANNHEIM.—Herr Bazzini has given several concerts with great success.

MILAN.—At the Cannobbiana *I Paritani* has created a great sensation, principally owing to the singing of the tenor, Giuglini, of whom we have already had occasion to speak in terms of high praise. We are of course on our guard against Italian enthusiasm, but in this case we are inclined to the opinion that the new tenor is much above the ordinary run, and London and Parisian managers will no doubt have an eye upon him in the present scarcity of singers. In the third act he seems to have particularly distinguished himself and elicited the enthusiastic applause of the whole house. He is considered decidedly superior to Moriani, even in his best days. Since the time of Rubini, no one has created such a sensation in Italy in this third act. The critics seem to think that his singing is not so manly as it might be, and they instance his rendering of the tenor part in *La Favorita*. What is needed is a good *mezzo-caratters* tenor, in Mario's line and, if report speak true,

Sig. Giuglini is the man. The two characteristics are very seldom combined, and the same reproach was continually made to Rubini himself. Mad. Viola was also much applauded. *La Sirena* by Sig. Rossi is in rehearsal.

TURIN.—The Carignano has inaugurated the autumnal season with Verdi's *I Lombardi*. The opera was well received, although the execution was but indifferent. At Trieste, Sig. Apoloni's new opera, *L'Ebreo*, continues to draw good houses, and has taken a firm hold on the public. The principal singers are Mad. Cattinari, Signori Negrini and Cornago.

NEW YORK.—(From our own Correspondent.)—The great musical event of the season—at least, what was anticipated as such—has come off. Mr. Bristow's new opera, *Rip van Winkle*, has been produced, and achieved a genuine success, in spite of a host of grumblers—among others, your friend, *The Musical Review and Gazette*. Of Mr. Bristow's musical capacities, M. Jullien has given you a foretaste in his symphony played at his last Winter concert at Covent Garden or Drury Lane. The Symphony found favour in the eyes of the critics, and, in one journal, was lauded in the highest possible terms. The new opera was produced at Niblo's theatre, on Thursday, the 4th of October, and attracted a very large audience. *Rip van Winkle* is the second opera produced in this country by an American. The first was *Leonora*, composed by Mr. W. H. Fry, a gentleman with whom your readers cannot be entirely unacquainted. *Leonora* was brought out at Philadelphia by the Seguin troupe, about ten years ago, when it ran for sixteen nights, and was, to all appearances, entirely successful. It has not, however, kept the stage. It was, according to the French form, a real grand opera, with the dialogues in recitative, and ballets and spectacles introduced. Mr. Fry has composed other operas, none of which have appeared. *The New York Musical World* states that *Leonora* was the first grand opera of the modern school by either an English or American composer. I know not that; but it is probable, as all the English operas have spoken dialogue.

The *New York Musical World*—which appears to be well informed on the subject—gives a somewhat "Yankee" reason for the expulsion of Mr. Fry's operas from the stage. "The managers of all the theatres in New York, exclaims that respectable authority, 'as is well known, are in utter fear of a journal whose editor has made war on Mr. Fry and all his productions from the moment *Leonora* appeared. The public is sufficiently acquainted with the causes of this hostility, but is hardly aware that its exercise has, up to this time, through the acknowledged subserviency of the managers of all the theatres, deprived Mr. Fry of a hearing in New York for any of his operas; though his symphonies, through M. Jullien, who defied the wrath of the editor in question, have been frequently performed.' To avoid giving you a one-sided impression of Mr. Bristow's new work, I shall send you an extract from the *New York Musical World*, and another from the *Musical Review and Gazette*—two journals, as you must be well aware, of opposite feelings, politics, and powers:—

"Mr. Bristow's musical conceptions," exclaims the *Musical World*, "mostly come into being from an orchestral stand-point. It is seldom that he leaves this point of view, and therefore his experience in instrumentation may be said to be as fully suggestive of melodic figures to him as the libretto itself. When he does break away from this charmed sphere, the effect upon the popular ear is more direct, and so, more easily appreciated. This seems clear from the immediate favour bestowed upon the songs, 'The day is done,' 'Nay, do not weep, my Alice dear,' the cavatina of the 'Vivandière,' and the ballad, 'When circled round in youth's glad spring,' all of which received hearty encores, because they were simple, chaste, clear and marked in rhythmical construction, free from intricate orchestral entanglements, and moreover in happy accordance with the spirit of the words. The out-world music of the spirits of the night and daughters of the morning was so mixed up with thunder and lightning from behind the scenes and blasts of brass at our immediate right, that the intelligent appreciation of the words was well nigh lost. Some of the recitations may perhaps be shortened with good effect. We were glad to notice that the primal idea in the overture was the religious movement in the second act, 'God of battles! hear our prayer.' This is resting the fate of the overture upon safe ground. May this wise choice and bold

treatment of a short phrase of close and strong harmony be a token of future high and severe study."

The *Review and Gazette*, as usual, growls, and puts no faith in the new composer.

"Mr. Bristow has," it says, "evidently done his best to profit by these opportunities; he has done as all composers of first operas are wont to do; he has given all he knows of music at once. Generally, first works of this kind show abundance of ideas, but lack in execution. Here we meet the contrary. The ideas, at least what may be called so, are not at all abundant; but the execution is first-rate, especially when we consider the difficulty of the task. The principal merit of Mr. Bristow's work lies in its orchestral treatment, which is throughout fluent and full of interesting traits. The quarrelling scene between Rip and his wife, and the ballad of the latter in the second scene of the first act, illustrate our remark better than anything else in the piece. The fairy scenes at the end of the first act were, however, not as we expected them to be, after we had heard how well Mr. Bristow could command his orchestra. Here the lack of ideas was too prominent, and the fairy character observed as little as possible. Since Weber and Meyerbeer we are so accustomed to a lively representation of fairy life, that we want, at least, to be reminded of this when it lies in the task of the composer. The instrumentation sounds somewhat monotonous; it is much more symphonic than operative. The brass mingles not skillfully enough with the wood and the strings, and modern orchestral effects in operas seem to be altogether avoided. But what we missed more than anything else was the art of characterizing, in a musical sense. This is not dramatic music which Mr. Bristow gives us; it is rather a sort of subjective musical expansion of different matters. The joy and the grief have almost the same colouring, and certainly, in most instances, the words are rather an objection to the estimation of the merits of the composer. The part of Edward (tenor) seems to come off in this respect better than any other, and the duet between him and Alice, in the first part of the second act, has some interesting parts. But Rip Van Winkle himself, that humorous old Dutchman, loses, by the music he has to sing, all his primitive character, and, in a musical sense, almost nothing but Dutch phlegm remains."

The principal parts were distributed as follows:—Rip Van Winkle (Mr. Stretton), Dame Van Winkle (Miss Pyne), Alice Van Winkle (Miss Louisa Pyne), Edward Gardiner (Mr. Harrison), Frederick Vilcoos (Mr. Horncastle), Young Rip Van Winkle (Mr. Miller.) The scene lies partly among the Catskill mountains and partly on Saratoga plains. The action extends over the space of twenty years. Time of the first act, 1763; of the second act, 1777; of the third act, 1783. The libretto is founded on Washington Irving's well-known story, and there is an episode relating to the American War introduced to give the piece a national air. I cannot say much for the drama. There is too much verbosity, and too little movement. In fact, I do not think Mr. Bristow has had a fair chance. As a first work, I think *Rip Van Winkle* exceedingly clever, but I am certain it would not do in England; it wants many of the elements that conduce to popularity. Miss Louisa Pyne alone, of the singers, is entitled to high praise. She sang delightfully, and was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Stretton, the new English bass, did not create any particular sensation. He has a strong voice, which he barks out at times in rather a strange manner. He seems, however, to be an experienced vocalist.

Mr. Bristow was called for at the end, and made a speech, in which he returned thanks. The entire scene was perfectly English—I should say, Londonian, and for a moment I fancied myself at Drury Lane after one of Bunn's "unprecedented successes," when that incomparable master of humbug came forward, and vowed to the breathlessly attentive audience, "how he never, never could forget such kindness as—etc., etc."

The Royal Academy of Music has re-opened under the sole management and direction of Mr. W. H. Paine, a gentleman with whom, on the outset, everybody appears satisfied. *Il Trovatore* was given the first night. Mad. Lagrange—naturally enough—failed in *Leonora*, not having sufficient power or dramatic feeling. The second opera, *Linda di Chamouni*, was better suited to her, and pleased much better. In neither of the operas did the gentlemen appear to any advantage whatsoever. Mad. Castellan has not arrived. Will she do? I doubt it. The rôles of the *prima donna* are beyond her means. A more delightful *seconda donna* can hardly be heard. But she

will be for singing what she ought not to sing—the Grisian parts—and rejecting what she ought to accept. Your old friend, Signor Rovere, of Royal Italian Opera memory, was the Marquis in *Linda*, and displayed even less voice than ever, if that were possible.

OPERA AND DRAMA.

BY RICHARD WAGNER.

(Continued from page 676.)

CHAPTER II.

In every case, where, as with the Romanish nations, a rhythm founded upon prosodical longs and shorts in spoken verse was never attempted, and where the line was, consequently, determined solely by the number of syllables, the final rhyme established itself as the indispensable condition of the verse.

In this final rhyme are characterized the essential attributes of *Christian* melody, as the spoken remains of which we must regard it. We shall immediately appreciate its importance if we call to mind the plain song of the Church. The melody of this kind of song is, rhythmically, entirely undetermined; it progresses, step by step, in perfectly equal bars, and rests only when the breath is exhausted, and for the purpose of obtaining a fresh supply. The division into good and bad portions of bars is an introduction of a later period; the primitive church melody knew of no such division; roots and conjunctive syllables were, for this melody, of exactly equal value; language had for it no justification, but only the power of being merged in an expression of feeling, the tenour of which was fear of the Lord, and a yearning for death. It was only when the breath was exhausted, at the end of a section of the melody, that the language of words took a part in the latter by means of the rhyme of the final syllable, and this rhyme certainly so affected the last sustained tone of the melody alone, that with the so-called feminine terminations, it was only necessary for the short complimentary syllable to rhyme, the rhyme of such a syllable being considered equivalent to a masculine final rhyme, either before or after it—a clear proof of the absence of all rhythm in such melody and verse.

The verbal verse, separated at last, by the profane poet, from this melody, would without a final rhyme have been totally irretrievable as verse. The number of the syllables on which the voice rested equally without distinction, and according to which alone the line was determined, could not, as the pause for breath of the song did not mark it as strikingly as in the melody when sung, separate the lines recognisably from each other, if the final rhyme did not so fix the audible moment of the separation as to compensate the wanting moment of the melody, the change of breath in the song. The final rhyme, on which, as on the separating break of the verse, the voice rested, obtained, therefore, such importance for the spoken verse, that all the syllables of the line had only to perform the office of a preparatory attack upon the concluding syllable.

This movement towards the concluding syllable was entirely in keeping with the character of the language of the Romanish nations, which, after the most manifold admixture of foreign and worn-out component parts of speech, had developed itself in such a manner that all intelligence of the primitive roots was completely lost to the feelings. We see this most plainly in the French language, where the spoken accent has become the direct opposite of the intonation of the root-syllables according to what must have been natural to the feelings as long as there was any connection between the intonation and the roots of the language. A Frenchman never intonates any save the concluding syllable of a word, however near the commencement the root may be in compound or lengthened words, even though the concluding syllable be merely an unessential termination. In a phrase, he crowds together the words to an equal-toned attack, becoming more and more rapid, on the concluding word, or rather on the concluding syllable, on which he rests with a strongly raised accent, even

when the syllable in question—as is generally the case—is far from being the most weighty one in the phrase, for, in direct opposition to the spoken accent, a Frenchman invariably so constructs the phrase as to crowd together its presupposing elements in the commencement, while the German for instance, transfers them to the end. We can easily explain, by the influence of the verse with a final rhyme upon every-day language, this conflict between the purport of the phrase and its expression through the instrumentality of the spoken accent. Directly every-day language prepares, in any particular state of excitement, to find vent in expression, it does so involuntarily in accordance with the character of the verse in question, the remnant of the ancient melody, while the German, on the other hand, speaks, under similar circumstances, in alliterative rhyme; as, for instance, "Zittern und Zagen," "Schimpf und Schande."

But the most distinguishing feature of the final rhyme is that, without any significant connection with the phrase, it thus appears as a make-shift for the production of the verse, a make-shift which ordinary language is compelled to adopt in its expressions, if it would speak with increased emotion. Verse with a final rhyme is, as regards the ordinary expression of language, an attempt to communicate a more elevated subject in such a manner as to produce a more suitable impression upon the feelings, by causing the expression of ordinary language to convey its meaning by means different from those of every-day life. The expression of every-day life was, however, the organ of communication of the understanding to the understanding; by the instrumentality of a more elevated expression different from this one, the person communicating his sentiments wanted in a certain degree to avoid the understanding; that is to say, he wanted to address himself to that which is distinct from the understanding, namely, the feelings. He endeavoured to effect this by awakening the material organ for the reception of speech, an organ which received the communication of the understanding with completely indifferent unconsciousness, to a consciousness of its own activity, and by attempting to produce in it a purely sensual pleasure in the expression itself. Now a line concluding with a final rhyme is perfectly capable of so far exciting the sensual organ of hearing to attention, that it may, by listening for the return of the rhymed end of the section of words, feel enchained; but, by this course, it is simply excited to attention, that is to say, it falls into a state of anxious expectation, which must be fulfilled in a manner satisfactory to its power, if it is to give way to such vivid interest, and, finally, to be so fully contented, as to be capable of communicating the delicious impression it has received to the entire faculty of sensation of man. It is only when the latter's whole power of feeling is completely excited with an object communicated to it by a receiving sense, that it gains sufficient strength to expand inwardly from its full condensation in such a manner as to present the understanding with endlessly enriched and seasoned nourishment. But as the comprehension of the thing communicated is the only object kept in view, even the poetical intention finally tends to a communication to the understanding alone; in order, however, to arrive at this completely certain understanding, the poetical intention does not presuppose it, from the commencement, at the point it wishes to attain in its communication, but would have it, to a certain extent, first precreated out of its own comprehension, the organ of parturition of this procreation, being, so to say, man's power of feeling. The latter, however, is not inclined for parturition until it has by conception been placed in the high state of excitement in which it obtains strength to bring forth. This strength first comes, however, through necessity, and necessity through the superabundance to which what is received by the power of feeling has grown; that which overpoweringly fills a bearing organisation, is what first drives it to the act of parturition, and the act of parturition the comprehension of the poetical intention, is the communication of that intention on the part of the recipient feeling to the inward understanding, which we must regard as the end of the necessity of the parturitive feeling.

Now the word-poet—who cannot communicate his intention to the organ of hearing, which receives it in the first instance,

with such copiousness that the organ in question shall be plunged which it is absolutely compelled further to communicate what it has received to the whole faculty of feeling—can, if he wishes to enchain this organ continuously, only degrade and blunt it, by rendering it to a certain extent forgetful of its endless power of reception—or else he completely renounces its endlessly realizing co-operation, he abandons the fetters of its sensual participation, and employs it again only as a slavish, dependent bearer of the immediate communication of the understanding to the understanding; which, however, is as much as to say: the poet renounces his intention, he ceases to write poetry, he simply excites in the receptive understanding that old element which was already known to it, and previously presented by sensual perception, to a new combination, but does not itself communicate any fresh object. By merely elevating spoken language into rhymed verse, the poet can do nothing more than compel the receptive hearing to unsympathetic, childishly superficial attention, which is incapable of extending inwardly for its object, the inexpressive word-rhyme itself. The poet, whose object is not simply to excite such unsympathetic attention, must end by completely turning away from the co-operation of the feelings, and by endeavouring to dissipate completely his fruitless excitement, in order again to be capable of communicating undisturbedly to the understanding.

We shall now be capable of perceiving more in detail the only manner in which this state of very highest excitement of the feelings, endowed with strength for production, is to be realized, as soon as we shall have examined in what relation our modern music stands towards this rhythmical or finally-rhymed verse of the poetry of the present day, and what influence such verse has been able to exercise upon it.

(To be continued.)

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

NATIONAL OPERA.

To the Editor of the Musical World.

SIR,—You will, I hope, excuse me trespassing on your valuable time, as the subject on which I am about to write is one of great importance to that portion of the English public which, through your valuable paper, you represent. That England has no National Opera you will readily admit, and that the absence of such an establishment is a disgrace to the country every one must acknowledge. On the continent, it is not only the principal cities that possess an opera, almost every small town in the provinces in possession of a theatre has also a good though small band, and generally a decent troupe of singers, who perform all sorts of operas, from *Guillaume Tell* down to the newest little *opéra comique*, more or less well. If, then, the small provincial towns of France, Italy, and Germany can support an opera, cannot London—the largest and richest metropolis in the world—do the same? That it can, there is not a doubt; but why it does not is a mystery which remains to be solved. It cannot be supposed that the English nation is unmusical; it cannot be affirmed that the musical taste of the English public yields in the smallest degree to that of any other people; it cannot be argued that we have no first-rate singers, whilst we number amongst our countrywomen Madame Clara Novello, Madame Albertini—now Madame Bauchardé, who is already celebrated in Italy—Madame Fiorentini, Miss C. Hayes, Miss Birch—whom, by the bye, the French acknowledged, as far as voice was concerned, to be superior to any of their countrywomen when she was in Paris some years ago—Mrs. Sims Reeves, and several others whom it cannot be denied are worthy of a place in any lyric establishment; nor, furthermore, can it be said that we have no native composers, for we have a great many excellent musicians, whose names are at least as worthy as those of Adolphe Adam and Louis Clapisson, of the French Institute, and who, if they had a chance, would soon show that they are by no means inferior to some of the “renowned” foreign composers of the present day.

For a very long time I have been forming plans for the most effectual mode of establishing a permanent National Opera—not one so disreputable to England as a musical country, and so wretchedly conducted as that to which the London public has been accustomed of late at Drury Lane, the Surrey, and elsewhere—but a first-rate establishment, at which singers, band, chorus, and everything else should be first-rate.

This, I am certain, is the only way of ever establishing a real English Opera, as the London opera-goers will never listen to anything second-rate, and in this I must say they are perfectly right.

And now, sir, before I proceed to lay before you the resolutions that I have taken, I must beg of you to consider this letter quite private and not intended for your journal.*

I have determined, if possible, before my death to see a regular national opera established in England; and as, in a short time, I hope to be in possession of a certain fortune which I wish to spend in behalf of that art, which unhappily is so undervalued by the greater part of our countrymen, I think I cannot better employ it than in opening a large lyric establishment in London, or keeping it going, if I may use such a word, until that time when the English nation will be too proud of it to let it fall to the ground for want of support.

And now, Mr. Editor, I must ask you to be so very obliging as to give me, through the medium of your excellent paper, a few hints as to the improvement of the following propositions, and also to answer me those questions which inexperience obliges me to trouble you with.

I propose:

1. That Her Majesty's should be fixed on as the most suitable theatre for an English opera house.
2. That the season should last eight months, beginning in December and ending in August; thereby enabling the artists to assist at the great provincial musical festivals.
3. That the days of performance should be Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, so as to interfere as little as possible with the Italian Opera.
4. That those works most fit for the English stage of the great foreign masters, should be performed as well as those of British composers.

Well, sir, supposing that these rules were scrupulously adhered to, and that the prices of admission were fixed at about the same rate as at the Grand Opéra at Paris, do you really think that a permanent National Opera might be established? Will you also inform me, sir, if the undernamed principals, with the usual staff of *secondes donne*, etc., a first rate band, and a thorough good chorus, would be sufficient to make a beginning with?

Prime Donne.—Madame Clara Novello, Miss Birch, Mlle. Nau, and Mrs. Weiss.

Contralti.—Madame Amadei and Miss Fanny Huddart.

Tenori.—Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. Swift, and Mr. St. Albyn.

Baritono.—Mr. Weiss.

Bassi Profondi.—Herr Formes and Mr. Henri Drayton.

By this list, you will see, sir, that the principals are English, with only two exceptions, which, unless I am very much mistaken, goes a long way with the greatest part of the public. Though I dare say there are many persons in England who have great objections to a National Opera, I think it must be generally admitted that it would be of great good if it had in view no other end than that of affording such singers as Clara Novello and Sims Reeves an opportunity of displaying their talents in a theatre worthy of them—of giving employment to a certain number of poor fiddlers and half-starved chorus-singers, and last, though by no means least, that of making known the works of many very excellent British composers. And now, sir, I will trouble you no more; pray excuse me having trespassed so much too far on your valuable time, and with my sincere thanks for the obliging manner in which you have always replied to my former enquiries,

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

Chambéry en Savoie,

October 18th, 1855.

P.S., Oct. 21st.—I was on the point of sending this to the post when a friend of mine here handed me the *Musical World* of the 6th inst., bringing the most unexpected intelligence that there is a prospect of an English opera. Such being the case, I have been doubting for the last few days whether I ought to send you this letter, but as there is just a possibility of the National Opera Fund turning out a failure, I think I may venture to trouble you with my prattle.

S. A. C.

[We see no reason for keeping the above communication private. It is merely the expression of the honest opinions of an individual, no way directly interested, on the establishment of an English opera. With regard to the queries, we answer: First.—Her Majesty's Theatre is too large, and would be too expensive. Second.—We see no objection to the disposal of the season. Third.—The days fixed for the performances entirely meet our views. Fourth.—The introduction of foreign as well as native works is inevitable. Fifth.—The list of principals is a good list, but capable of improvement.—Ed. M. W.]

* Why then write it? We could not think wasting so much good matter.—Ed.

NATIONAL OPERATIC COMPANY.

To the Editor of the Musical World.

SIR,—Your facetious correspondent, "Nochimoff," thinking, no doubt, that in these "out of the season" days a little "original correspondence" would be somewhat of a novelty, has startled the numerous readers of the *Musical World* with some "funny" strictures upon the committee of the National Opera Company. The gist of his letter I conceive to be this:—"Nochimoff" has written an opera, good of course, granted—his love of the art, not ambition, would perhaps get the better of his natural modesty, and prompt him to submit it to the committee for approval; well and why does he not do so? because the committee consists of five members, and he not being one of the members, describes the incapacities for office of four of them in something like the following manner:—"No. 1 is self-interested—so 'knock him off'" says your "considerate" correspondent. No. 2 has other fish to fry—over with him says the unselfish "Nochimoff." No. 3 is one likely to exhibit "natural wants"—head-over-heels with him says the funny wretch. No. 4 is "an unknown"—so "Nochimoff" is puzzled for an excuse to capsize him, but subsequently in a desperate effort to get his own idol "No. 5" recognised, he consigns No. 4 to the agreeable companionship of Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and then he breathes freely, for No. 5 is a "sound musician," who is not guilty of a weakness for writing operas, neither has he any intimate friend (query) or relative who does, so he may be allowed to remain.

Now, sir, I confess to have an interest in the success of the National Opera, and although "Nochimoff" may, on this score, even reject my right to give an opinion, with your permission, and through the medium of your columns, I propose saying just two words upon the subject.

Let me then first deal with "Nochimoff," though not after his own summary fashion. It does not require a very "clever ghost" to see through him. In spite of his assertion as to No. 5 having no connexion with any "weak minded" writer of operas, etc., I am much mistaken if "Nochimoff" has not partaken of "bohea," mulish, and other little hospitalities at the fireside of No. 5, in other words, No. 5 and "Nochimoff" have a "sneaking kindness" for each other, whether cemented over a "nice cup of tea," etc., is of little moment, but I simply premise the fact, and that such being the case "Nochimoff" desires to place his friend in that exquisite state of feeling experienced by a certain Yankee, who modestly expressed himself thus:—"America is the finest country in the world; New York is the finest city in America; and I am the finest man in New York!" No one can blame No. 5 for securing such a friend as "Nochimoff" nor blame "Nochimoff" for "cuddling" such a friend at Court as No. 5, but to thus inconsiderately place the extinguisher on all No. 5's colleagues, is coming it rather too strong.

"Nochimoff" expresses his willingness to have the merits of his opera (which he confesses a fond affection for) judged by the "solitary decision" of No. 5. (And here I think "Nochimoff" shows the cloven foot.) No doubt he speaks from the bottom of his heart, "weak tho' it be"—I don't mean the opera. But let me ask, is this a "broad line of policy" to be adopted, in order to ensure the success of such an important undertaking? That No. 5 is a first-rate fiddle no one can deny, but I am somewhat averse to vesting such unlimited power in any one person, and I would ask you to point, if you can, to the success of any undertaking, over which No. 5 has gained any influence? The Harmonic Society, for instance, after struggling through one season of trials and vicissitudes, adopted the suggestion of No. 5, that the members of the orchestra should give one gratuitous performance out of nine! Such acts as this make hard-working, ill-paid orchestral performers look with an eye of suspicion upon men placed in authority and unlimited power, who hesitate not to sacrifice their humbler brethren, if, by so doing, they can maintain themselves upon the "dizzy heights of ambition." I have not, like "Nochimoff," written an opera—couldn't, if I tried; but orchestral engagements being almost my sole support, I should have been better pleased to see some one in authority at the National who takes an interest in the welfare of an orchestra, and who abominates low salaries. Perhaps my views are selfish, and even "Nochimoff"—your very "Original Correspondent"—condemns anything like interested motives, although he would fain sacrifice four out of five persons, if, by so doing, he could secure the acceptance of his opera, which, no doubt, is as original as his letter. To conclude, I conceive the establishment of a permanent English opera a most desirable object, worthy the consideration of all right-thinking native musicians; therefore when such an effort is made, if we do not choose to put our shoulders to the wheel, let us at least not prejudge the efforts of those who are devoting their talent and energies in so good a cause. It is only when the vanity and egotism of one man is sought to be gratified, that the profession at large should murmur. We could not all figure

as promoters, but we can all help the good work in many other ways: some of us by silence only. Let us not show the foreign artistes who are residing among us, that English musicians are the only ones who, having no faith in each other, cannot be united in a good cause.

I enclose my card, and should "Nochimoff" desire to know who I am, just say, Yours very truly,

October 24th, 1855.

KNOCK-OFF-NOCHIMOFF.

P.S. Not being of an anxious temperament, I am in no hurry to witness the opera by your "Sophisticated Composer" performed at the Theatre, governed solely by his supreme catgut idol No. 5.

NATIONAL OPERA.

To the Editor of the Musical World.

SIR,—It seems to me, that in your leading article of this week on the National Opera Company, you come to the very germ of the matter when you suggest the appointment on the committee of gentlemen who view music in reference to its commercial value, as well as to its merit as an art production.

National Opera Companies have been projected many times these twenty years, and they have always failed. Why? Is it not because they are usually started by artists themselves, who—without attributing to them any undue leaning towards having their own works done—naturally enough desire to hear what is called "good music"—that is, "high art" works—performed? Now, there is no denying that this "good music" without a popular composer's name (will it be going too far to add, and a foreign one), to back it, will not pay; and even then, perhaps, it may be doubtful. Perhaps it would be well to ask the Directors of the Royal Italian Opera which they find brings most money to the treasury: a classical work by Spohr, or a popular one by Verdi. The question therefore is, do the shareholders want "good music" or good dividends? If the former, I can see nothing to object to the selection of the gentlemen who act upon the committee; if the latter, one must hope for the best—but I fear. I would suggest, that after an opera has passed the ordeal of approval by the artistic committee, it should be further subjected to the scrutiny of some official appointed by the shareholders for that express purpose—one who shall have had a large experience in theatrical exigencies, and who would know just where to throw in the "blue fire" with effect. He should have full authority to return the work to the composer, with the words "more eight-bar tunes," scribbled across it—the due supply of which, to order, I would make a condition of the work being performed. Seriously though, would it not be as well if "we English" were to try our hand a little at the Auber style of rhythm, seeing it is not (as proved in his case) incompatible with good music, and the public seems to like that sort of thing better than the severe school, and, after all, the theatre is not the church, nor the concert-room—a truism, which probably nobody will deny. I am, sir, yours very truly,

New Cross, October 24th.

JOSEPH R. W. HARDING.

DUPREZ WHEN A CHILD.

EVERY one is aware that, during the first years of his life, the celebrated Duprez was known only by the name of Gilbert.

Choron was, perhaps, the only person who guessed what the young pupil chance had confided to him would, one day or other, become. Gilbert, indeed, was more than a pupil for Choron: he was a beloved disciple, whom Choron could not hear sing without being moved. Very frequently, incapable of mastering his emotion, he has been known to burst into tears at the tones of his adopted son. Sometimes he would take a pleasure in uniting his own trembling, and even rather false, voice to the pure and melodious one of the child.

However, in accordance with the French maxim: *Qui aime bien chatie bien*, Choron, who adored his pupil, used frequently to find fault with him. One day, after Duprez had been undergoing a severe lecture, his father made his appearance at the school in the Rue-Notre-Dame-des-Champs.

"Well, M. Choron! are you contented with Gilbert?"

"No, sir—he is a young rascal, whom I mean to punish."

"You will be quite right to do so, sir, and I will assist you myself, if necessary," said Duprez, sen., flourishing his stick, "just let me show you!"

"What!" exclaimed Choron, "let you show me! Do you mean to say you would beat him—a child who sings like an angel?"

"But you said, sir—"

"The best scholar in my school!"

"You were complaining—"
 "Who will, one day or other, be the first singer of his time!"
 "Oh—no—he has so little voice!"
 "Voice—voice—what does he want with voice? If he has
 not got a voice *he will sing with his leg!*—and, even then, he
 will sing better than any one else."

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